
AP Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Free Response Question 8

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AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 8

6 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly identifying Nigeria as the country from the table with the poorest environmental performance in 2014.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct statement that describes the relationship between environmental performance in 2014 and the level of economic development.

An example of a correct statement is:

- Wealthier countries tend to have higher environmental performance scores.
- Higher GDP per Capita correlates with higher Environmental Performance Index (EPI) scores.
- Developing countries tend to have lower environmental performance scores.
- Lower GDP per capita correlates with lower EPI scores.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of one cause of the relationship between environmental performance and the level of economic development.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Wealthier countries have more money to spend on the environment.
- Wealthier countries are less industrial and have more service-oriented economies.
- Wealthier countries have greater state capacity to address environmental issues.
- Wealthier countries invest more in research, development, and innovation related to the environment.
- Wealthier countries tend to focus more on post-materialist issues, such as the environment.
- Developing countries have fewer resources to devote to environmental issues.
- Developing countries focus more on basic material problems.
- Developing countries must focus more resources on their economies than wealthier countries.

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why Great Britain had the highest EPI score in 2014, but one of the lower rates of improvement in environmental performance over time.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Many of the environmental standards had already been put into place.
- Less room for environmental improvement.
- Less political focus because remaining environmental problems seem more marginal and less threatening.

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Question 8 (continued)

Part (e): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of a political response by Chinese citizens to their country's environmental problems.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Protesting about environmental concerns, such as air and water pollution
- Forming organizations such as NGOs and interest groups to advocate for solutions to the problem
- Using petitions to change environmental policy
- Filing lawsuits related to environmental problems

Part (f): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of a policy response by the Chinese government to the country's environmental problems.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Locating factories outside of urban areas, limiting the times when factories may operate, shutting down factories, or regulating factory emissions
- Creating more stringent fuel emission standards, controlling traffic, investing in mass transit, or promoting bicycle use
- Investing in new technologies, including renewable energy supplies
- Signing the Paris Climate Agreement in order to reduce pollution
- Banning coal in rural areas
- Regulating logging to curb deforestation or planting trees
- Creating a new environmental bureaucracy or ministry

A score of zero (0) is earned for an attempted answer that earns no points or for an off-task answer.

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank.

8A

Country	GDP per Capita, PPP (2014)	Environmental Performance Index* Score, 2014	10-Year Improvement in Environmental Performance Index
China	\$7,593	43	2.6%
Great Britain	\$45,603	77	3.4%
Mexico	\$10,362	55	7.94%
Nigeria	\$3,185	(39)	3.73%

Source: World Bank (GDP per capita at purchasing power parity PPP)

*Environmental Performance Index is an aggregation of 20 indicators reflecting national level environmental data for 166 countries. Higher EPI scores indicate better environmental performance.

8. Using the table and your knowledge of comparative politics, complete the tasks below.
- Identify the country from the table with the poorest environmental performance in 2014.
 - Write a statement that describes the relationship between environmental performance in 2014 and the level of economic development.
 - Describe one cause of the relationship between environmental performance and the level of economic development.
 - Explain why Great Britain had the highest Environmental Performance Index score in 2014 but one of the lower rates of improvement in environmental performance over time.
 - Describe one political response by Chinese citizens to their country's environmental problems.
 - Describe one policy response by the Chinese government to the country's environmental problems.

8a. Nigeria had the poorest environmental performance in 2014.

8b. ~~There are countries with higher increasingly higher levels of~~ There is a positive correlation between a country's level of economic development and ~~that country's~~ environmental performance in 2014.

8c. Countries that are more economically developed can afford to create and purchase more technology that prevents pollution and other harm to the environment. This can include ~~sources~~ building wind turbines.

8A2

to use as an energy source instead of burning fossil fuels that release pollutants into the air. ~~Less~~ Less economically developed countries cannot afford this technology and have to use cheaper materials that harm the environment.

8d. Great Britain is one of the world's oldest developed nations, as they gained resources from the reign as the world's ~~most~~ ~~bravest~~ bravest empire and had one of the first industrial ~~revolut~~ revolutions. Environmental improvement is usually a priority ~~after~~ a few years after the ~~economy~~ economy has reached a fairly high or stable level. Since this occurred for the British so long ago, most of their environmental improvement occurred in the 20th century, so while they do have ~~the~~ the highest EPI score of 2014, they have protected the environment well for more than just the last decade and have had less need to improve.

8e. As a response to their country's environmental problems, Chinese citizens created (state-approved) interest groups to voice concern about the state of the environment. This allowed environmental activists to voice their concern to CCP policy makers.

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Question 8 is reprinted for your convenience.

8A3

Country	GDP per Capita, PPP (2014)	Environmental Performance Index* Score, 2014	10-Year Improvement in Environmental Performance Index
China	\$7,593	43	2.6%
Great Britain	\$45,603	77	3.4%
Mexico	\$10,362	55	7.94%
Nigeria	\$3,185	39	3.73%

Source: World Bank (GDP per capita at purchasing power parity PPP)

*Environmental Performance Index is an aggregation of 20 indicators reflecting national level environmental data for 166 countries. Higher EPI scores indicate better environmental performance.

8. Using the table and your knowledge of comparative politics, complete the tasks below.
- Identify the country from the table with the poorest environmental performance in 2014.
 - Write a statement that describes the relationship between environmental performance in 2014 and the level of economic development.
 - Describe one cause of the relationship between environmental performance and the level of economic development.
 - Explain why Great Britain had the highest Environmental Performance Index score in 2014 but one of the lower rates of improvement in environmental performance over time.
 - Describe one political response by Chinese citizens to their country's environmental problems.
 - Describe one policy response by the Chinese government to the country's environmental problems.

and make their voice heard.

8E. One policy response by the Chinese government to the country's environmental problems was limiting the emissions of air pollutants by Chinese companies and factories. This helped address the issues of smog in Chinese cities and make both the environment safer a China a healthier place to live with safer air to breathe.

8B,

Country	GDP per Capita, PPP (2014)	Environmental Performance Index* Score, 2014	10-Year Improvement in Environmental Performance Index
China	\$7,593	43	2.6%
Great Britain	\$45,603	77	3.4%
Mexico	\$10,362	55	7.94%
Nigeria	\$3,185	39	3.73%

Source: World Bank (GDP per capita at purchasing power parity PPP)

* Environmental Performance Index is an aggregation of 20 indicators reflecting national level environmental data for 166 countries. Higher EPI scores indicate better environmental performance.

8. Using the table and your knowledge of comparative politics, complete the tasks below.
- Identify the country from the table with the poorest environmental performance in 2014.
 - Write a statement that describes the relationship between environmental performance in 2014 and the level of economic development.
 - Describe one cause of the relationship between environmental performance and the level of economic development.
 - Explain why Great Britain had the highest Environmental Performance Index score in 2014 but one of the lower rates of improvement in environmental performance over time.
 - Describe one political response by Chinese citizens to their country's environmental problems.
 - Describe one policy response by the Chinese government to the country's environmental problems.

a) Nigeria has the poorest environment performance because they had the lowest EPI score with 39.

b) Countries that have a lower GDP per capita and PPP ~~and~~ tend to have a lower EPI rating.

c) When countries have a low GDP and PPP then some environmental standards are disregarded because people and companies just want to generate revenue. ^{too much}

d) Great Britain had the highest EPI rating in 2014 but one of the lower rates of improvement in environmental performance over

time. Because Great Britain ~~is~~ has already been a very developed country with a strong economy for a long time so environmental standards have been better for longer so they do not need to improve too much.

e.) Chinese citizens have protested ~~about~~ the mistreatment of the environment by some Chinese companies.

f.) China's government has implemented some policy to regulate pollution and maintain the environment but there has not been much change caused by the Chinese government.

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8C1

Country	GDP per Capita, PPP (2014)	Environmental Performance Index* Score, 2014	10-Year Improvement in Environmental Performance Index
China	\$7,593	43	2.6%
Great Britain	\$45,603	77	3.4%
Mexico	\$10,362	55	7.94%
Nigeria	\$3,185	39	3.73%

Source: World Bank (GDP per capita at purchasing power parity PPP)

*Environmental Performance Index is an aggregation of 20 indicators reflecting national level environmental data for 166 countries. Higher EPI scores indicate better environmental performance.

8. Using the table and your knowledge of comparative politics, complete the tasks below.
- Identify the country from the table with the poorest environmental performance in 2014.
 - Write a statement that describes the relationship between environmental performance in 2014 and the level of economic development.
 - Describe one cause of the relationship between environmental performance and the level of economic development.
 - Explain why Great Britain had the highest Environmental Performance Index score in 2014 but one of the lower rates of improvement in environmental performance over time.
 - Describe one political response by Chinese citizens to their country's environmental problems.
 - Describe one policy response by the Chinese government to the country's environmental problems.

1A The country with the poorest environmental performance in 2014 is China with a score of 43.

1B While not always true, in most cases, the level of economic development has an inverse relationship to environmental performance.

1C The relationship between economic development and environmental performance can be explained by a prioritization of industry. In ~~countries~~ countries such as China, an emphasis of the current regime has been industrialization. This implies large factories contributing to pollution of the air, water, and land. Obviously, this negatively impacts the environment, which is seen as

the price for continued economic improvement.

[D.] Great Britain's period of ^{major} industrialization occurred ~~about~~ 100 years ago. Once the priority stopped being industry, and the economy stabilized, there could be a focus on environmental improvement. In the past 10-years, not much has been improved because the period of focused improvement occurred years previously.

[E.] Political action by Chinese citizens is discouraged by the government. However, environmental interest groups have been formed to petition the government for legislation. These groups also participate in self-funded efforts to help the environment. Unfortunately, the groups hold little weight and are small.

[F.] Although internal protest of the ~~of~~ environmental degradation is too small to carry weight, international pressure has led to some policy being created for the environment's benefit. A position in the government has been created to address environmental concerns. However, the position holds little influence and is generally considered a ~~of~~ to be a placation device.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 8

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' ability to interpret data, their understanding of the relationship between economic development and environmental policy, and their knowledge about existing environmental policy in China. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. Students had six specific tasks. They had to identify the country with the poorest environmental performance in 2014 from a table summarizing relevant World Bank data for four countries, describe the apparent relationship between economic development and environmental performance based on the data in that table, and describe a possible cause of that relationship. Further, they had to explain why a country (the United Kingdom) could score so high on the Environmental Performance Index and yet show so little improvement over the last ten years, and describe both a political response by Chinese citizens and a policy response by the Chinese government to environmental problems.

Sample: 8A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for identifying Nigeria as the country with the poorest economic performance in 2014. This response is based on a correct reading of the data presented in the table.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing, "There is a positive correlation between a country's level of economic development and environmental performance in 2014." Additional acceptable responses include that wealthier countries tend to have higher environmental performance scores, higher GDP per Capita correlates with higher Environmental Performance Index (EPI) scores, and developing countries tend to have lower environmental performance scores.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing, "Countries that are more economically developed can afford to create and purchase more technology that prevents pollution." Additional acceptable responses include wealthier countries are less industrial and more service oriented, wealthier countries tend to focus more on post-materialist issues, and wealthier countries have greater state capacity to address environmental issues.

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for correctly explaining that "so while they do have the highest EPI score of 2014, they have protected the environment well for more than just the last decade and have had less need to improve." An additional acceptable response is that there is less political focus on the environment as the remaining environmental problems seem more marginal and less threatening.

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing that "Chinese citizens created (state-approved) interest groups to voice concern about the state of the environment." Additional acceptable responses include that Chinese citizens have protested for environmental action, used petitions to the government, and filed lawsuits over environmental problems.

In part (f) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing that the Chinese government "was limiting the emissions of air pollutants by Chinese companies and factories." Additional acceptable responses include that the government has regulated emissions from automobiles, invested in mass transit, and created a new environmental ministry to address environmental problems.

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Question 8 (continued)

Sample: 8B

Score: 4

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for identifying Nigeria as the country with the poorest economic performance in 2014. This response is based on a correct reading of the data presented in the table.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing, “Countries that have a lower GDP per capita and PPP tend to have a lower EPI rating.” Additional acceptable responses include that wealthier countries tend to have higher environmental performance scores, economic development is positively correlated with environmental performance, and developing countries tend to have lower environmental performance scores.

In part (c) the response did not earn a description point. The statement, “When countries have a low GDP and PPP then some environmental standards are disregarded because people and companies just want to generate revenue” could more clearly address the need for developing economies to focus more on material resources and economic development than the environment.

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for correctly explaining that “environmental standards have been better for longer so they do not need to improve too much.” An additional acceptable response is that there is less political focus on the environment as the remaining environmental problems seem more marginal and less threatening.

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing that “Chinese citizens have protested the mistreatment of the environment by some Chinese companies.” Additional acceptable responses include that Chinese citizens have formed organizations or interest groups to advocate for solutions to the problem, used petitions to the government, and filed lawsuits over environmental problems.

In part (f) the response did not earn a point for this description. The statement that “China’s government has implemented some policy to regulate pollution and maintain the environment” does not offer enough specifics as to how China has responded to environmental problems.

Sample: 8C

Score: 2

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for this identification. The response incorrectly identifies China as the country with the poorest economic performance in 2014. The correct response is Nigeria.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for this description. The statement that “the level of economic development has an inverse relationship to environmental performance” incorrectly suggests that an increase in one of the two variables corresponds with a decrease in the other.

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for this description. The statement, “In countries such as China, an emphasis of the current regime has been industrialization,” does not indicate whether wealthy or developing countries are more likely to adopt such a policy.

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for correctly explaining, “In the past 10 years, not much has been improved because the period of focused improvement occurred years previously.” An additional acceptable response is that there was less room for improvement in Great Britain than in the other countries.

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Question 8 (continued)

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for correctly describing, “Political action by Chinese citizens is discouraged by the government” but “environmental interest groups have been formed to petition the government for legislation” and “[t]hese groups also partake in self-fueled efforts to help the environment.” Additional acceptable responses include that Chinese citizens have protested for environmental action and filed lawsuits over environmental problems.

In part (f) the response did not earn a point for this description. The statement, “A position in the government has been created to address environmental concerns” and “the position holds little influence and is generally considered ... to be a placation device,” does not offer enough detail.